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Device to help blind board bus

Somit.Sen@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: BEST has introduced on a trial basis a device which helps visually challenged persons board buses.

The device helps users to identify the route number of buses at a bus stop and locate door, thereby enabling unsupervised boarding.

Sources told TOI that trials were conducted for more than two months. During the first phase of trials, units were fixed in 16 buses on routes 121 and 134, which led to over 100 boardings by visually impaired persons. The second phase saw the units in 24 buses operating from Backbay depot. The unsupervised boardings were successful, establishing the utility of the device in real settings, the sources said.

The cost of the handheld device has not yet been determined. The pilot trials were largely funded by the Department of Science and Technology under their TIDE (Technology Interventions for the Disabled and Elderly) scheme. The next step will be to scale up the trials, officials said.

M Balakrishnan, from AS-



BEST MOVE: The device works on radio frequency and consists of a small user module and a bus module, with a speaker fitted next to the front door of the bus

SISTECH, IIT Delhi, said, "Nearly 350 unsupervised boardings over two months have given us immense confidence as well as feedback to take the project forward."

BEST general manager Jagdish Patil said the transport undertaking was committed to provide safe and comfortable travel to all commuters. "It is a unique device that facilitates boarding of public buses by visually impaired persons," he said.